DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 329 732 CE 057 211

TITLE	Teaching and Learning Strategies: An Evaluation of BTEC Courses.
INSTITUTION	Further Education Unit, London (England).
REPORT NO	ISBN-1-85338-212-4
PUB DATE	Dec 90
NOTE	9p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Basic Skills; *Business Education; Comparative Analysis; Curriculum Design; Educational Research; Education Work Relationship; *Engineering; Foreign Countries; Full Time Students; Higher Education; Job Skills; Part Time Students; *Student Centered Curriculum; Student Characteristics; *Teaching Methods; Technical Education; *Work Experience Programs
IDENTIFIERS	*Business and Technician Education Council; England

ABSTRACT

A British study reviewed teaching and learning strategies used in Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) courses in the context of growing emphasis on student-centered approaches and work-based competence. Course coordinators, tutors, course teams, and students in Business Studies and Engineering departments at 16 centers were interviewed. The study compared learning experiences offered by different modes of study of BTEC-supported courses in the context of BTEC's general guidelines on course implementation. Findings showed that: (1) students and teachers welcomed a student-centered approach; (2) teachers had difficulty with their new role of facilitator; (3) student-centered methods were thought more time-consuming; and (4) different methods were needed for part-time students. The idea of integrative assignments was well-received, but their design was a new and difficult process for teachers. Teacher confidence in assessing common skills varied widely. Work assignments were considered important but not widely used. Course teams were recognized as the key factor in effective course delivery. Links with employers needed to be strengthened. Aims, content, and duration of induction needed to be reviewed. Specific areas of concern included staff development, effectiveness of integrative assignments, and employer linkages. Development of workshops and materials that met these needs was recommended. (YLB)

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TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

AN EVALUATION OF BTEC COURSES

December 1990

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FOREWORD

As is clear from their published guidelines, Teaching and Learning Strategies, *BTEC is concerned to encourage colleges and other centres to develop teaching and learning strategies appropriate to the circumstances and backgrounds of students. Possible differences in students' preferred learning styles and modes of attendance need to be taken into account when planning course provision. It is also important that teaching and learning strategies contribute to the development of competence, both in terms of occupational skills and 'common skills', and that assessment practices are supportive of the learning process.*

This report summarises the findings of a study undertaken by the National Foundation for Educational Research, on behalf of BTEC and the FEU, to investigate the extent to which centres considered such issues during the planning and delivery of BTEC courses.

The study found much good practice but identified many areas of concern. It is evident that much more needs to be done in developing learner-centred approaches, which recognise that students have valuable and unique experiences to bring to the learning process, before it can be claimed that the BTEC Guidelines are being followed by all centres.

All those college staff concerned with the planning and delivery of BTEC courses will find this document useful in the design and implementation of their BTEC provision.

Nick Brewster
Development Officer
Further Education Unit

INTRODUCTION

AIMS AND METHODS

Aims

The project jointly funded by the Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) and the Further Education Unit was initiated in late 1987 by BTEC's Teaching and Learning Strategies Panel. Its aims were:

1. to review teaching and learning strategies used in BTEC courses in the context of:
   - growing emphasis on work-based competence and transferable skills and the need for an adaptable workforce
   - BTEC policy in relation to this, and in particular, its 1986 General Guidelines on course implementation
2. to compare learning experiences offered by different modes of study, focusing on:
   - the development of student-centred approaches in course delivery and use of students' own experience (current and previous)
   - features of each mode and student needs
   - development of 'common skills' and integrative approaches to course delivery
   - assessment and the learning process

Methods

Course co-ordinators and tutors in both Business Studies and Engineering departments were interviewed at 16 centres. This was followed by two- to three-day visits to selected departments by researchers from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) who interviewed course teams and students.

BTEC National courses in Business Studies and Engineering were chosen because they are widely available, well supported and represent contrasting traditions within the BTEC mainstream. It should be stressed that findings from this project are equally relevant to other BTEC courses and sectors.

BACKGROUND

BTEC modes of study

BTEC-supported courses lead to National Diplomas (typically two years full time) and certificates (typically two years part time). Students take some 16 units for

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the Diploma and about ten for the Certificate of which eight are typically 'core' (four each year) and the rest 'options'. The design lengths of Units are notionally 90 hours (full time) and 60 hours (part time).

Day release (6.5- to 10-hour day) is the most common part-time mode. Alternatives are a half day plus evening (sometimes two evenings) or evenings only (two or three). Some large employers release students for 'block' study (often four weeks at a time and sometimes on their own premises) which alternates with work attendance.

Work experience is essential for full-time students (often one or more two-week blocks or one day per week for perhaps 20-30 weeks). Simulated work practice may be used if no placement is available.

Traditional full-time Diploma and part-time Certificate routes remain but other routes increasingly erode this division:

- the Diploma may be taken part time over a third year
- 'full-time' Certificates are occasionally offered with work experience or under the 21-hour rule for the non-employed
- joint education and training programmes may be set up with employers; Engineering Industry Training Board (EITB) first year trainees have four days a week basic training plus a day release BTEC course to attend and the college may be involved in both
- varied arrangements may be made of on- and off-job training work experience and educational courses for YTS trainees
- open and distance learning students may progress at their own pace with varied attendance and course duration
- BTEC Certificates of Achievement (in principle any grouping of units) are used increasingly and may also be used as a route to some NVQs

Modes of study have developed to meet needs. The project sought to review how far opportunities were taken to meet student needs and compensate for constraints in the various modes.

BTEC General Guidelines

There are three BTEC General Guidelines on course implementation: **Assessment and Grading; Teaching and Learning Strategies**; **Common Skills and Core Themes**. Together with BTEC's policy of writing competence-based unit objectives these promote student-centred and work-linked strategies such as:

- strong use of projects and assignments where students can work in teams, tackle work-related problems, and become actively involved in their own learning
- teaching and learning strategies that support this approach, stimulate students' interests and personal qualities, and offer individual counselling and review of learning
- strategies for learning across units through realistic assignments and work-based projects helping students develop and use their 'common skills' in their studies and work experience
- methods of assessing competence as expressed in principal objectives and common skills statements including observation, peer and self assessment, and evidence of competence drawn from task processes
- emphasis on the formative role of assessment, monitoring progress towards explicitly stated criteria which are available to students, employers and others

The programme of integrative assignments (PIA)

The PIA is a major element in this overall strategy. It must attract at least one unit's learning support time in each course year and focus on common skills development. This is a minimum and the aim is that most course and unit assignments should be realistic and activity-based and that common skills should be developed and profiled through the medium of all assignments.

Some experienced course teams treat all course and unit assignments as **integrative assignments** while others may keep unit assignments distinct but use comparable methods in these. Examples of integrative assignments and advice on their design are published in BTEC's *Common Skills and Core Themes: Illustrative Material and Advice*.

Common skills

Common skills are defined in the General Guideline and each course is expected to have a common skills statement. The Guideline includes a **specimen skills statement** which details 12 **skill areas** and course skill statements should include the substance of these areas. A shortened list in the Guideline outlines five broad common skills areas:

- self-development skills
- communicating and working with others
- problem tackling, decision making and investigating
- information, quantitative and numerical skills
- practical skills

FINDINGS

GENERAL RESPONSE TO LEARNER-ORIENTATED APPROACHES

General attitudes and practice

Overall student and teacher responses suggested that a student-centred approach was welcomed because it encouraged self-motivation and thinking: although it meant harder work for students and teachers, it was also more rewarding for both. Many tutors felt it

would be easier to adopt such approaches when more students had experienced them through the new school curricula.

However, wide divergence in teachers' attitudes and practice was evident within departments as well as between departments and colleges. Some still relied heavily on didactic teaching with students in a passive role; others promoted active learning, used a wide range of teaching and learning strategies and worked in teams to integrate course material.

Even teachers committed to student-centred approaches did not always use them for various reasons, some of which are suggested below.

Knowledge and competence

'Getting through the course' and giving 'needed' theoretical knowledge were often viewed as paramount, leaving little time for activity-based work. There was some evidence that theory is often included through habit rather than because it is essential for competence. This seems to be, at least in part, a habit inherited from past course objectives and difficult to break.

One argument for a more traditional, didactic approach was that it was needed to help students progressing onto higher courses. However, a number of tutors felt a BTEC National course prepared students better for higher education than did conventional 'A' levels: especially in hands-on experience, group work and research skills.

BTEC's newer unit specifications stress competence, applied knowledge and skill. They facilitate an assignment-led approach and discourage overload with non-essential knowledge. Several tutors felt, for example, that the new BTEC National courses in Engineering motivated students better and that students liked the activity-based approach.

Teachers as facilitators

Coming to terms with a new role as a learning resource and a facilitator can be difficult for teachers whose status and experience are based on subject expertise. Even those committed to change felt that sometimes 'it was difficult not to lecture' and hard to admit 'we don't know all the answers'. It was not easy to shift emphasis from content to process.

Those more experienced in the role stressed the need for confidence to allow others into their classrooms, to stop seeing individual assignments as 'belonging' to them, to develop trust and to work in a team without fearing criticism. There was a need to become a generalist and help on others' courses. This meant 'admitting that you don't know things and that doesn't come easily' - and being prepared to learn from one's students.

Time and resources

Student-centred methods were generally thought more time consuming, both in designing assignments (which needed practice and skill) and in their use by students. Formal methods were 'more efficient' (though less thorough) in passing on knowledge but not always effective in developing skill or competence.

Practical approaches were more difficult when there was 'only six of everything but about 30 in a class'. 'We've got to make sure it's easier for lecturers to teach in a student-centred way - the students certainly like it,' said one Head of an Engineering Division. This implies a range of support (e.g. flexible timetabling and staff development) as well as physical resources.

Student attitudes

Student attitudes were individually influenced by their previous experience and expectations but were also likely to be influenced by tutors' views and approaches. 'You are a college lecturer, why aren't you teaching me' might be heard from some students, yet well established assignment-led courses produced high student motivation.

Staff who favoured student-centred methods tended to say students did too and those who observed committed course teams felt that the spirit 'rubbed off' onto the students.

Opposite views of part- and full-time student needs - i.e. that student-centred methods were suited to part-time but not full-time students and vice versa - are difficult to explain without considering tutor behaviour.

The most successful courses gave great support to students for early assignments within the programme and were planned carefully so that they demanded more student responsibility as they progressed.

Employer responses

There were similar differences amongst employers who might, after hearing about an integrative assignment, complain that the student 'wasn't being taught properly'.

One employer however, after studying the assignment in question told the tutor that 'he wished he had had an education like this'. If tutors were able to discuss assignments more with employers it is likely that there would be fewer negative attitudes.

Differences between business and engineering

Some Engineering tutors were generally seen as didactic, and often claimed that Engineering was less suited to student-centred methods than, for example, Business Studies. However, other Engineering tutors disagreed. There were examples of strong assignment-led courses in both Business Studies and Engineering, with similar teaching and learning strategies.

The need to teach more concepts was given by some tutors as a reason for more formal methods in Engineering. However, Business Studies tutors' longer experience of approaches like those promoted by BTEC must play a part in differences between the two areas.

Barriers to development in part-time modes

Tutors tended to focus on full-time Diploma courses,

and the development of assignments and of teaching and learning strategies tended to be geared to them.

Part-time Certificate courses are designed on the assumption that there is concurrent work experience with consequent reductions in curriculum hours. However, they were sometimes described as a 'watered-down' or curtailed version of the full-time course. The same or similar assignments were often used, although activity-based assignments designed initially for full-time students were sharply curtailed for part timers because of time constraints.

As a result, part-time courses tended to be much more information-oriented and heavier use of part-time teachers often reinforced this. Time constraints were the main reason given for using more formal approaches on these courses.

Student-centred methods for part timers

Because part-time students' needs and constraints are different from those of full timers, student-centred methods and materials designed for full-time courses are not likely to meet these needs. A student-centred approach for part-timers would make use of work experience and involve an individual approach, particularly for students employed by small firms.

Although some tutors felt part-time students responded well to active learning methods, work experience was in fact very little used as a resource for their assignments.

In general, part-time (and especially evening) students were restricted by the shorter learning period and more traditional teaching methods, without the chance to extend or apply their learning in the workplace in any structured way.

Open learning routes

Open learning modes (where they existed) gave more attention to individual student needs and requirements: high quality materials, tutor learning support and workshops where students could work in groups were offered.

These students valued tutor and group contact and were in a better position than distance-learning students, who might have only telephone contact with tutors.

Some open learning students took their units end-on so that integrative approaches were inevitably difficult (though not necessarily impossible). Common skills development, assessment and work-linked approaches were also likely to be problematic. Unfortunately it was not possible in this study to pursue such issues in detail.

INTEGRATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Benefits of assignment method

Assignments are a central element in course delivery and a key learning strategy. Benefits of their use (outlined in BTEC's *Guidelines on Teaching and Learning Strategies*) include:

- actively involving **students** in the learning process, integrating knowledge and skills from several disciplines and developing problem solving and other common skills;
- freeing **teachers** from 'information dispensing' so that they can manage the learning process; design learning experiences; guide, monitor and counsel students through these experiences; and then evaluate the process.

These benefits apply even more clearly to integrative assignments and PIA (the reader is referred to *Common Skills and Core Themes: Illustrative Material and Advice* for detailed discussion and illustration of assignment methods).

Designing assignments and PIAs

The idea of integrative assignments was well received but their design was a new and difficult process for many teachers. This was especially true in Engineering where they had been fairly recently introduced. The PIA was hard to plan and required much tutor collaboration to ensure it linked with other work.

Two opposing approaches to PIA design were evident (though practice often fell between them):

- PIAs might be designed after unit schemes of work had been written - this could mean that the assignments became either free-standing tasks, hard to relate to the course, or a medley of disjointed components, each linked to a different unit and 'marked' by a different tutor;
- the course team would design a PIA to foster common skill development and cover a spread of principal objectives from different units; other work (assignments and acquiring information) could then be programmed to support the PIA and to fill gaps - this approach ensured a more central and integrative role for the PIA and related learning methods.

Assessment

Confidence in assessing common skills varied very widely. Some Business Studies and Engineering courses had continuing student profiles of development in each skill area and made use of student peer and self assessment. In other cases, tutors did not feel competent to assess common skills and might leave this entirely to General Studies or Communication tutors.

There was some tendency in Engineering departments to 'downgrade' the importance of common skills due perhaps to lack of confidence in assessing them or to greater concern with knowledge and theory.

BTEC's grading requirements (one grade to cover all common skills) may have affected the perceived status of common skills for some Engineering teams. Although a similar grading system applies to BTEC Business Studies National courses, tutors may be influenced by the BTEC Business First Diploma where a grade is given for each of the eight common skill areas.
In the assessment of unit objectives there was some

desire to move away from individual tutors marking components of the PIA to a system where each assignment was assessed as a whole, involving the development of tutors' 'generalist' skills.

Workplace assignments

Workplace assignments are important for all students but their potential contribution is in some ways greater for part-time students because of the shorter time for the course - some tutors felt it was difficult for them to complete integrative assignments satisfactorily in the time available.

Workplace assignments were seen as important but were not widely used. Various reasons were given for this:

- too much time would be needed to devise individual assignments for students with different employment experience;
- employer opposition to interference with productivity or firms vetting assignments because of confidentiality;
- problems in meeting needs of students disadvantaged by limited resources at work, by unemployment or by repetitive jobs (who must prefer assignments not linked with the job).

It is suggested that these constraints can be and are overcome by well designed assignments and employer negotiation - part-time students can themselves help in assignment design and did so in this study. Future effort is clearly needed to increase use of workplace assignments especially for part-time students.

Staff development needs

The need for more time, help and guidance on PIA design was widely felt. In some centres action had already been taken including residential weekends or day workshops, remission for a core team and use of in-service training (INSET) funds to give cover - allowing tutors to design and review assignments.

Course teams often kept to themselves: it was not common to seek or exchange ideas with teams in other departments or other colleges. Given the necessary support, there are little-used resources which could be more widely drawn upon for the design of assignments. These include colleagues, employers and the students themselves.

COURSE TEAMS

A key to managing learning

Course teams were generally recognised as the key factor in effective course delivery. A cohesive team could provide the range of skills and attributes unlikely to be found in one person but needed to manage the course. However team structure and size were crucial to effectiveness.

Role of core teams

Core groups were usually formed where teams were large. They would meet regularly and take responsibility for matters such as the PIA. Whole course teams meet less often to discuss issues such as student progress and final assessments.

In one department a core group of five was formed (from a team of 25) to ensure coherent course planning. The group sought opinions, prepared an action plan and organised a residential weekend where final plans were developed and it was agreed that three core group members would change each year. It was decided that the approach would become department practice.

In another case the core team included a tutor from another department (General Studies) who 'managed the PIA' but could not attend regularly. This adversely affected development of the PIA and assessment of common skills.

Role of course team leader

Course team leaders and co-ordinators were key personnel in managing change as well as in managing learning yet they had received little if any relevant training. It may be the FE sector has yet to recognise fully the managerial aspects of this role.

The role was crucial in enabling groups to work together as teams and demanded high levels of personal as well as organisational and creative skills. Team leaders would have welcomed assistance in areas such as interpersonal relations and persuading staff to embrace new ways of working.

Support from senior management

There were a number of areas in which teams looked for, and welcomed, support from senior management. These included:

- flexible approaches to 'class contact' and timetabling, to help teams meet and do other work such as visiting employers
- support for team building and preparation of materials through e.g. remission and INSET funds for cover; production of guidelines on effective functioning of teams
- recognition that team planning and development time is crucial if current and future demands for effective, work-related, course delivery are to be met

Although team building is clearly a key factor it was rarely planned or developed systematically. In some cases INSET money was provided for teams to meet in and outside college and to have much needed 'time for reflection'.

LINKS WITH EMPLOYERS

The need for strengthened links

National developments suggest a greater role for employers in education and training. BTEC Guidelines stress the importance of this role for relevant student learning. They propose that course teams should encourage employers to:

- contribute to planning implementation and review of courses;
- help in the design and implementation of work-based projects and provide case study material;
- play a role in student assessment.

It was recognised that in most cases practice fell a long way short of BTEC's requirements, with much scope for improvement. There was concern that departments and teams unable to develop much stronger employer involvement could face serious difficulties in the future.

Developing practice

Where course teams felt they were 'finding their feet' in new approaches to course delivery they were perhaps not ready to approach employers for closer involvement. This may help to explain low employer involvement in many cases.

Nevertheless, some teams had managed to involve employers in some or all of the following activities:

- contributing to course teaching
- monitoring and assessing work experience
- providing real work problems for projects
- helping to design PIAs
- taking part in role-play exercises
- assessing students' oral presentations
- attending end-of-year meetings to finalise student grades
- forming part, with moderators, of an assessment panel for full- and part-time courses and playing an equal role in assessing students
- attending meetings to review, evaluate and advise on the relevance of the course

Approaching employers

Many tutors were disappointed in their attempts to involve employers: written invitations and requests for information had met with a very low level of response. It was important to appreciate employer constraints of time and money, and work within these to engage interest so that they could see a real return on their involvement.

Personal contact was seen as the starting point e.g. through short courses to meet employer needs, visiting students on work placement or direct approach. It was crucial 'to get out and about - do necessary footwork - make employers feel important' and, ideally, allocate a number of companies to each tutor (although the tutors would need remission for this to be effective).

In one college tutors were attached to companies both to market the college and to provide assistance. Tutors had each spent around three hours per week building fruitful relationships.

Not every employer will sit down with tutors and design a PIA. However there are many contributions that can be made in a less detailed and formal way. Tutors found that valuable feedback often arose in informal contacts and a useful approach may be to use such contacts more systematically, perhaps backed up by checklists of issues.

Questions should be geared to an employer's perceptions and it will take time to establish these so that the most useful issues can be raised effectively: even a request for a statement of 'skills' needed by employees may meet with little response if there is not a shared understanding of what is meant by 'skills' - a word which can have many different meanings in FE.

Staff development needs

Tutors who felt they needed help and advice on how to build links with employers, often thought they lacked negotiating skills and felt disadvantaged because of this.

At the same time it appears that most employers do not recognise that they can have an important role to play in further education. Only a much greater degree of personal contact is likely to break through fears and insecurities on both sides and ensure the learning and development that is needed. In this, colleges and teachers must be initiators.

INTRODUCTION PROGRAMMES

Programme length

All students received some induction, though this ranged from one hour to two whole weeks. Typical time spent on induction was:

- Business Studies full-time: one or two weeks
- Engineering full-time: one or two days
- Business Studies part-time: half to a whole day
- Engineering part-time: one or two hours

A few teams had found imaginative ways of extending the time students spent on induction. These included a weekend residential for part-time students, giving students material and tasks during the summer before they enrolled and a pre-enrolment evening when a course video was shown and discussed.

Content

Induction might cover any of the following:

- getting to know each other: ice-breakers, games and team-building activities
- introduction to college, staff, facilities, and resources (a college booklet might be provided and was sometimes distributed beforehand)
- introduction to the course and to BTEC philosophy, practice in assignment approaches, and learning to use tutors as a resource (the course manual may have been given out previously)

- viewing a video about the course made and presented by current students and discussing the course with them
- sampling the available options before making a choice
- diagnosis of student needs and weaknesses (e.g. in communication and mathematics) - this was not common
- reviewing (work-based) assignments carried out over the summer and using this to provide information about themselves and their work

Assessment of prior learning

Although there was some diagnosis of student needs, no use seemed to be made of opportunities to give credit or exemption for prior achievement. In one case a student was allocated a different option from that usually offered as he already had a good knowledge of the subject from previous experience. The possibility of exempting or crediting the option was not raised.

Need to review role of induction

Content and length of induction were to a certain degree dependent on perceived student needs but the very great differences in length probably owed more to course team priorities and, in the case of part-time courses, concern to 'get through' the course (it was generally felt a longer induction for part-timers was desirable).

A decision to put on a substantial induction programme which gives experience of assignment methods and activity-based learning suggests a level of confidence in these methods which is likely to convince students.

The converse is also true: without such a programme the later introduction of activity-based assignments - especially well into the course when students have the 'necessary knowledge base' - may result in problems for students and staff and lose more time than would have been needed for a more developed induction programme.

Trends towards modular programmes and to a demand for assessment of prior learning underline the need to review aims, content and duration of induction programmes, especially for part-time students.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

Scale of change needed

1. Although elements of good practice were evident in a few cases, it is obvious that considerable development is needed. While there was wide acceptance of a need for change, systematic approaches to planning this or even confidence that it was practicable seemed generally lacking.

2. Not surprisingly staff attitudes often showed insecurity and lack of confidence, both in their own abilities to adapt and in the support available. Many arguments against change were expressions of this and were disproved by the practice of other colleges, teams and teachers.

3. Although there was evidence that senior management was aware of the need for development and gave some support for this, there seemed insufficient general recognition of the character and scale of what is required or of the kinds of strategies and priorities that are implied.

4. There was a common view that student-centred methods are more time-consuming and resource-intensive (sometimes backed by a claim that they are less 'productive'). It was rarely understood that this can be reversed provided institutional systems and resources are structured to support them and necessary staff skills and materials are developed. Funds to assist with this are available but are not always tapped.

5. Recent developments underline the urgency of the situation:

   - moves toward modularisation, rather than invalidating the 'course team' approach, will demand greater staff skills in management of learning, in sharing learning and experience with colleagues, and in designing flexible approaches and materials for individual programmes;
   - initiatives on quality assurance place the main focus on programme teams and their ability to plan and review processes while the NVQ emphasis on competence will progressively outlaw didactic methods and require greater collaboration with industry.

Areas of concern

6. Specific areas of concern arising from the project are outlined below:

   - Many staff currently lack the skills necessary to exploit fully the advantages of the BTEC system. There is need for radical development of the complex of skills required for the role of manager and facilitator of learning. This should be approached systematically, as is the case in some colleges.
   - Changes in the system make part-time students more disadvantaged than in the past. Learning strategies and assignments more appropriate to their needs should be developed. It is essential that these make systematic use of students' work experience.
   - At present integrative assignments are in many courses not very effective vehicles for integration of learning, or for the development and assessment of common skills. The growing national emphasis on the importance of core skills increases the urgency of action on this.

     There is need for more effective co-ordination through core teams and for development of staff

skills both in assignment design, and in the assessment and profiling of common skills.

- The general failure to develop workplace and work-linked assignments is particularly serious in the context of future NVQ requirements. Much higher priority needs to be given to this.
- The crucial roles of course team and team leader and the development of the skills needed for their effective operation have received too little attention in many colleges. There is little recognition that course teams are a most effective vehicle for staff development in the new skills demanded of teachers.
- Induction programmes are effectively absent from many courses, especially part-time courses. Whatever their importance in the past, new methods of course delivery and other demands make serious attention to such programmes essential.

Needed developments

7. It is suggested that in the light of this project, issues mentioned above need to be addressed through development workshops organised nationally, in particular areas and in colleges. While this may be already happening with some of these issues, it is believed that a new initiative is warranted.

8. A strategy would be needed to include direct promotion of a programme of workshops, perhaps nationally and regionally, but also to encourage and support local initiatives including activity in individual colleges. This implies the need for relevant materials to promote and resource local and college workshops.

9. The initiative should be aimed equally at senior management and employers as well as course teams and team leaders. Careful thought would be needed on how to encourage employer involvement.

10. Issues on which workshops and materials might focus are outlined below:

    Course team development

    - strategies for course team development - structure, organisation, processes and skills
    - student-oriented methods and related staff skills
    - integrative methods - the PIA, assignment design and common skill development
    - delivering part-time courses to meet student needs
    - sharing experience with other teams in and out of college

    Course team leaders

    - managing the course team and course implementation
    - managing change: helping colleagues adapt to new roles and develop new teaching and learning strategies
    - issues, problems and personal skills needed - approaches to skill development

    Employer links

    - employer, student, college and staff interests and needs
    - effective ways of approaching and involving employers
    - work-based assignments and assessment - approaches and employer contributions

    Senior management and effective course delivery

    - strategies for course and programme team development
    - management support and guidance for teams
    - resourcing flexible and student-oriented programmes
    - employers' contribution to quality in course delivery

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people contributed to this study and the production of the report, and all deserve our thanks:

- the college staff who gave up much valuable time to share their views and experiences with the project team;
- the students who participated in the study with interest;
- the project team for their hard work, enthusiasm and ability to cope with mounds of data:
  Kevin Delf, BTEC; Henry Goodman, BTEC; Sean Leslie, BTEC; Una Christopher, NFER; Peter Earley, NFER;
- the steering committee for their support and feedback to the project team:
  Nick Brewster, FEU; Albert Clyde, FEU; Gurnham Heire, South Manchester Community College; Richard Hale, GEC Avionics; Wendy Keys, NFER; Ken Nuttall, BTEC; Mike Smith, Kingston Polytechnic;
- John Pursail for his work on the final presentation of this document.

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ISBN 1 85338 212 4